



THE EFFECTS

OF RESIDENTIAL OVERBUILDING ON OUR SCHOOLS

We often hear statements about growth and development in Frederick County that sound true – but that may be false. Those falsehoods are often spoken by

those with vested economic interests in having people believe them without question.

The problems associated with the “boom and bust” residential overbuilding in Frederick County have affected the lives of every school child in Frederick County. Consider these myths, truths and facts about our public school system.

THE MYTH

Developers and residents pay for the schools that they need.

THE TRUTH

Developers pay impact fees contributing to a portion of school construction but taxpayers still foot most of the cost for constructing and all of the operating costs.

THE FACTS

Building new schools is not the only cost to Frederick County; annual operations costs must be considered as well. It costs Frederick County approximately \$12,093/year to teach one child in the Frederick County Public School system; the state of Maryland pays part of that bill, Frederick County pays the rest, some \$6,694/student each year.¹ Total taxes collected per household for schools (property and income tax) on average is \$5,427, making the tax revenue/household in Frederick County about \$1,167 short of what is needed to educate one student.^{2,3,4} Total tax revenue shortfall per year to educate all Frederick County students (\$1,167 x 40,210 students) is \$46,925,070.⁵

REVENUE SHORTAGE PER YEAR TO EDUCATE STUDENTS

$$\text{\$1,167} \times \text{40,210 STUDENTS} = \text{\$46,925,070}$$

The chart below provides the cost to build and operate an elementary, middle and high school in Frederick County for 10 years.

School	Elementary	Middle	High
Cost to Construct	\$25,000,000	\$45,000,000	\$70,000,000
Cost to Operate for ten years \$12,093/student per year	\$84,651,000	\$108,837,000	\$193,488,000
Number of Students/School	700	900	1600

¹ 2010 Frederick County budget: Maintenance of Effort calculation.

² http://www.city-data.com/county/Frederick_County-MD.html

³ US Census Bureau Quick Facts <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/24/24021.html>

⁴ Bond Rating Agency Presentation, Dec 2009, Frederick County Board of Commissioners

⁵ Fast Facts About FCPS, 04-26-2010 <http://fcps.schoolwires.com>

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Help us get the messages about growth, taxes, schools and roads to fellow county citizens. Do you belong to an organization, church or neighborhood group we can talk to?
- Forward this to a friend who might be interested or want to become involved.
- Donate to our educational fund– even a small sum is a big gift! <http://www.friendsof-frederickcounty.org/you-can-help/donate/>
- Please sign on to our Facebook page and spread the word to your friends in Frederick County: <http://bit.ly/friends-of-frederickcounty>





THE MYTH

Schools are operating under 100% of state-rated capacity system-wide. We have solved our school problems.

THE FACTS

Eleven of the county's 37 elementary schools are at or over 100% capacity. In the current school year, over one hundred portables will be used at 25 elementary school locations. Of the county's 14 middle schools, only one is operating at or over 100% capacity; however, there remains the need for the use of 14 portable classrooms in 4 middle school locations. Of the county's nine high schools, four are operating at or over 100% capacity, with 42 portable classrooms in use at five locations.⁶

Growth pressures and a rising local birth rate have forced the Frederick County School System to build an average of at least one new school or major school addition every year since 1970.^{7,8} The need to build at least one new school a year has left older schools to deteriorate as maintenance and rehabilitation are becoming a major necessity.

Frederick County Public Schools operates 66 separate schools. Of these, 40 are, in whole or in part, more than 25 years old. Some are much older, ranging up to Lincoln Elementary School, which is 88 years old. Frederick High School is 71 years old. These older schools have suffered from deferred maintenance and at times are unsafe; parents are clamoring for relief.

While the school system, taken as a whole, is operating at under 100% capacity, there are vast disparities between different schools. The question then arises – why can't regular re-districting even out the classroom loads so all schools are

THE TRUTH

Many of our schools are overcrowded, in need of renovation and repair.

operating at or under capacity? The answer, simplified, is that (a) parents often fight redistricting tooth and nail, making redistricting a long, expensive and contentious process, and (b) many of our older schools cannot be modernized to meet today's standards without significant cost; even redistricting cannot help meet the educational challenges when money is not available for improvements.

Economic conditions and budget cutbacks have forced even the most desperately needed renovations to the back burner. Any increase in residential growth will only add to the pressures and, at the same time, reduce the funds available, per capita, to fix our older schools.



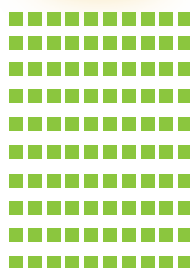
Frederick High School has a failing fire alarm system. There is but one single door opening to the outside from the lunchroom.



Lincoln Elementary School, 88 years old, will cost over \$30 million to replace. LES is but one of 40 schools that are over 25 years old.

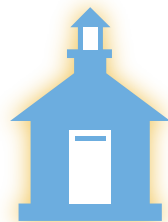
ELEMENTARY

11 of 37 at/over capacity
100+ portable classrooms



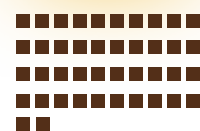
MIDDLE

1 of 14 over capacity
14 portable classrooms



HIGH

4 of 9 over capacity
42 portable classrooms



⁶ Fast Facts About FCPS, 04-26-2010 <http://fcps.schoolwires.com>

⁷ Many Places, One Community, A Comprehensive Plan for Frederick County, Maryland, 2010, p 02-10

⁸ Ray Barnes, Frederick County Public Schools Educational Facilities Director, Personal Communication, February 2010